

Session 11-02, a Special Meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Roberts at 5:30 p.m. on May 17, 2011 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Highland, Roberts, Smith, Velsko, Venuti

STAFF: Public Works Director Meyer  
Deputy City Clerk Jacobsen

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Committee.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no public comments.

### **RECONSIDERATION**

No items were scheduled for reconsideration.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting Synopsis of March 1, 2011

The Synopsis was approved by consensus of the Committee.

### **VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

No visitors or presentations were scheduled.

### **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS/BOROUGH REPORTS**

Public Works Director Meyer reserved comments for later in the meeting.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

There were no public hearings scheduled.

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

No pending business items were scheduled.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Recommendations for Expending HART Funds for Local Road Improvements

Mr. Smith reviewed the modeled extensions. Public Works Director Meyer suggested starting with the recommendations included in the CIP List as those projects can be perceived have been supported by the public process. He noted the only road projects supported by the CIP

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were Lake Street through to Heath Street, the town center infrastructure, and the land acquisition for new roads. He suggested focusing on acquiring the rights-of-way for the new roads, which includes extension of Hazel Street up to Bartlett, the section of Waddell Way connection between Lake Street and Heath Street, the section to take Poopdeck up to Pioneer, and an area on Early Spring.

The Committee focused discussion on the Waddell connection between Lake Street and Heath Street. Comment was raised regarding the clean up of a contaminated location within that area and Public Works Director Meyer noted his understanding that the DEC has closed it out as clean. He will try to get confirmation that it is the case. Other comments included:

- It is about 800 feet long.
- Curb and gutter, sidewalk, and drain will increase cost, but it won't be a million dollar project.
- It will need to be established if there is a need to bring the water line through. Sewer may not be necessary. The HAWSP fund may be able to help with that cost.
- It could be a two way street with some sort of pedestrian connection and bike access.
- Staff has had communication with the state regarding the improvements on Lake Street and asked the state to complete the intersection at Waddell.
- A turn lane off Lake Street may be needed to access the area. If we have an active Waddell project then the state will know what is happening there and be better able to plan to accommodate traffic in the area.
- Design work for Lake Street will likely start this winter so the Committee will be timely making recommendations at their next regular meeting.

Chair Roberts asked if all the Committee members are in favor of moving forward on focusing on the Waddell project for recommendation to Council and no objection was expressed. She also clarified that for the next meeting Public Works Director Meyer agreed to provide an estimate of cost the HART and HAWSP funds for this project, and status of remediation in the area. Chair Roberts also asked to have the necessary memorandums for the Committee to approve and pass on to City Council explaining why they think this is an important project and justifying why the money should be expended.

There was brief discussion about also including Greatland, another small road project, but the group agreed to focus on one recommended project and see how things progress.

It was requested that a map showing the modeled extensions be included in the next packet.

B. Recommendations for a Proposal to Make Waddell, Heath, Poopdeck, & Main Street Right Turn Only Thoroughfares

Mr. Velsko commented that this is an idea that smaller towns frequently use. It is kind of a poor man's roundabout where you don't have to buy rights-of-way and you are creating the flow of traffic without having a person blocking traffic trying to make a left hand turn. The local's have already figured out ways to keep from making left hand turns. It only increases travel time through town by a couple of minutes and keeps the integrity of the bypass in tact. Putting stop lights and stop signs on the bypass will cause issues for people who have businesses on the spit with the trucks going back and forth. We should try not to slow the bypass down. If the plan doesn't work, then we are only out the cost of a couple hundred dollars worth of signs. His feeling is that a stop light on the bypass will start slowing traffic down resulting in a congested downtown, and you can't get rid of a stop light after spending a

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couple million dollars to put in. This is something that has been done before and it is an easy and cost effective way to deal with traffic.

There was discussion that there may be challenges in working with state since it is their right-of-way. It was also noted there may be some disagreement in some cases for example turning off Main Street to get gas you would have to go up and around Pioneer. Public Works Director Meyer agreed that it isn't just the City's decision, but it is an option that could be presented to DOT and see if they agree. The city could push for this since they are dragging their feet to do anything on Main Street. Perhaps it could be seasonal from May 1 to October 1 and it could be as easy as putting signs over the stop signs that could come down after Labor Day.

Mr. Smith noted that when the traffic engineer teleconferenced with the Committee back when they were talking about intersections he made a good point in that you can never take a situation like the bypass and Pioneer Avenue loop and deal with any one intersection as an independent problem.

Mr. Velsko added that in discussion about roundabouts in the public meetings that were held the engineers commented off the record any time you are going to try to stop traffic on the bypass it throws up all kinds of red flags as it was designed as a thoroughfare. This proposal is not to stop traffic but help the flow of traffic.

The Committee concurred on the need to ask the state to look into the feasibility and do the necessary study. At this stage it is just a matter of getting the state to acknowledge that it's an idea the city wants to explore. This doesn't change everything to one way streets or affect parking.

VENUTI/HIGHLAND MOVED TO WRITE A MEMORANDUM TO CITY COUNCIL THAT WE WOULD LIKE RIGHT HAND TURNS ON ALL STREETS THAT GO ONTO THE BYPASS.

It was noted that this wouldn't apply to Lake and Pioneer.

VENUTI/SMITH MOVED TO AMEND THAT ALL THE STREETS BETWEEN LAKE STREET AND PIONEER AVENUE WILL BE RIGHT HAND TURN ONLY, SEASONALLY DURING SUMMER WHEN OUR TRAFFIC INCREASES SUBSTANTIALLY IN HOMER.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

There was no further discussion to the main motion as amended.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Chair Roberts noted that she will represent the Committee well when this comes before Council.

Ms. Highland asked if it would be appropriate for them to contact DOT directly. Public Works Director Meyer responded that there is nothing wrong with that, but added that the most effective way would be through a letter from the City Manager.

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Mr. Velsko commented that this isn't the end all for traffic issues. As the town grows there may be a time when a light is needed. But this may work as a temporary fix for many years and will save taxpayers a lot of money.

Mrs. Venuti added that it could be beneficial to find out how many times they have accidents from people turning left and include that for support of this idea.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

A. Certificate of Reappointment for John Velsko and Steve Smith

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

There were no audience comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE STAFF**

There were no staff comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**

There were no Councilmember comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Roberts had no comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Ms. Highland commented that she heard from a city resident about considering a cross walk on Ocean Drive at the Farmer's Market since that area gets so congested with cars, pedestrians, and bicycles. She looked at the book *Why we Drive the Way we Do*. It was geared more toward big cities and she didn't take any ideas away from it. She still likes the idea of take your turn at intersections.

Mrs. Venuti commented about having crosswalks at the location between Captain's Coffee and Salvation Army and also at the Chamber to get across the highway.

Chair Roberts requested Crosswalks as an agenda item at their next meeting and include a map showing locations of crosswalks. She noted a lot of these areas are state roads.

Mr. Velsko question Public Works Director Meyer about the culvert on Ohlson that keeps rising up. Mr. Meyer explained Ohlson is a state right-of-way and that the city agreed to removed the culvert and the state will be dealing with the drainage and replacing the culvert.

Mr. Smith commented that the crosswalks mentioned are state roads and they found that the state took none of their crosswalk recommendations for the East Road project. They are reluctant to put a crosswalk on a highway. He welcomed Mrs. Venuti.

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**ADJOURN**

There being no more business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2011at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

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MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_